

F.C.C. HEARINGS CONCERNING
MEDIA CONSOLIDATION

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Remarks by
Steve Binder

My name is Steve Binder. While attending the University of Southern California, one of my elective courses dealt with the history of the FCC. At that time, I never guessed the information that I learned would serve me well to be able to speak to you today. If I took anything away from that class, it was that the broadcast airwaves belonged to us, the citizens of this great country and not to any one individual or corporation and that the FCC was the independent regulator for our public interests. I venture to say that if you asked the American public today, "Who **owns** television?" you would hear that Viacom owns CBS, Rupert Murdoch owns Fox, General Electric owns NBC/Universal, Disney owns ABC and Warner Brothers and Paramount own the new CW network. All of these networks are corporations, whose primary interest is not the public they serve, but to their stockholders. They are a monopoly that control what we see and hear across the broadcast spectrum.

This was not the case when I got my first job in Hollywood. The marketplace was flourishing with independent producer/entrepreneurs who not only produced their 'ideas,' but benefited financially by owning their own shows after they aired on the network. The networks were merely the licensees of the product they aired and a highly competitive market of independent producers flourished. Today, I have the privilege of mentoring a lot of young, future generation producers with great 'ideas' who are turning away from an industry they would love to be a part of. They tell me that the best they can hope for is a hard-to-get job as a producer-for-hire, working on a project they're not allowed to own.

Since 1981, many old regulations have been repealed including the fairness doctrine, and as a result, we have entertainment monopolies controlling our public airwaves. The result....fewer independent voices in the marketplace. Unless you commissioners take responsibility for the powers that Congress has empowered you with, the public's interest and the independent producers who work in this industry are in grave danger and we need you to act on our behalf.